Adaptations Suggestions for Children with Disabilities

1. Modify the physical environment to maximize a child’s ability to participate and explore independently:

* Provide the materials at the child’s level
* Provide a variety of materials in accessible places
* Clearly mark where materials belong
* Provide children with soft pillows or cushions in book areas
* Check the height of tables to make sure each child is seated comfortably
* Use an easel with a clothespin in order to hold paper in place for drawing
* Use visual strategies (schedule for the day, the steps involved in a skill, such as washing hands)
* Create adequate space for children in walkers or wheelchairs to be independently mobile

2. Provide opportunities for peer interaction:

* Set up ‘buddies’ for certain activities
* Learn children’s interests and group children according to similar interests
* Create joint learning opportunities, such as 2-3 peers using plastic animals to sing “Old McDonald”.

1. Modify activities or instruction to enhance the child’s active participation in all aspects of the activity:

* Provide visual cues (pictures) of what you want children to do and to break activities down into single steps
* Slow the pace of speech
* Increase response time for children
* Allow children to use ‘fidget toys’ while in circle
* Provide children with something to hold that corresponds with the activity
* Shorten the length of circle time or large group activities
* Use different textures to increase attention
* Use items that correspond to children’s interests, such as providing materials from nature for sorting activities

4. Modify early literacy materials to maximize a child’s ability to easily manipulate and explore:

* Use board books
* Put Velcro between pages of books for easy turning
* Place tabs or small clothespins to aid turning
* Provide books on tape
* Provide pictures that correspond with pages of a book to increase participation and interest

***Remember that adaptations work best in activities that are based on the child’s interest!***

1. Observe the child and list possible challenges to the child’s ability to participate in activities.

2. Are a variety of materials accessible based on the child’s abilities and interests?

3. Reflect on what challenges the child may face when participating in early learning opportunities with his/her peers. What might be some opportunities for peer interactions?

4. What modifications might adults make to the physical environment to maximize a child’s ability to participate and explore independently?

5. How might the adults modify activities or instruction to enhance the child’s active participation in all aspects of the activity?

6. How might the adults modify early literacy materials to maximize a child’s ability to easily manipulate and explore?